

I claim:

1. A method for characterizing a risk of systemic lupus erythematosus for an individual, comprising the steps of:

- (a) obtaining a level of the individual's serum total bilirubin;
- (b) comparing the obtained level to a threshold level for serum total bilirubin; and,
- (c) characterizing from the comparison the risk of systemic lupus erythematosus for the individual.

2. A method for characterizing a risk of systemic lupus erythematosus for an individual, comprising the steps of:

- (a) obtaining a level of the individual's serum total bilirubin;
- (b) comparing the obtained level to a threshold level for serum total bilirubin of near or below 0.65 mg/dl for males and near or below 0.46 mg/dl for females; and,
- (c) characterizing from the comparison the risk of systemic lupus erythematosus for the individual, wherein an obtained level below the threshold level indicates that the individual is at increased risk for systemic lupus erythematosus.

3. A method for characterizing a risk of psoriatic arthritis for an individual, comprising the steps of:

- (a) obtaining a level of the individual's serum total bilirubin;

(b) comparing the obtained level to a threshold level for serum total bilirubin; and,

(c) characterizing from the comparison the risk of psoriatic arthritis for the individual.

4. A method for characterizing a risk of psoriatic arthritis for an individual, comprising the steps of:

(a) obtaining a level of the individual's serum total bilirubin;

(b) comparing the obtained level to a threshold level for serum total bilirubin of near or below 0.60 mg/dl for males and near or below 0.46 mg/dl for females; and,

(c) characterizing from the comparison the risk of psoriatic arthritis for the individual, wherein an obtained level below the threshold level indicates that the individual is at increased risk for psoriatic arthritis.